68: Mouhot--110 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 484, 776, 823, 579

"As for the Laotians, I have found them, although superstitious, very courageous, especially those who traverse this forest [HD: i.e. Dong Phya Phia, the forest of the 'King of Fire', between Khao-Khoc and Korat in Siam] eight or ten times a year. Some of them even venture to awake the 'King of Fire' by bringing down game or shooting at robbers: yet death , even in the best season, carries off one or two out of every ten who travel here. I think the number of those who fall victims to this terrible journey must be considerable in the rainy season, when every torrent overflows its bounds; the whole soil is soaked, the pathways nothing but bogs, and the rice-grounds covered with several feet of water. After five or six days' walking through all this, with feet in the mud, the body in a profuse perspiration, and breathing a fetid atmosphere, hot as a stove and reeking with putrid miasma, what wonder that many sink and die?"

68: Mouhot--112 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 776, 823, 579

"Our guides are all Laotians from the neighbourhood of Korat, and their leader is unremitting in his care and attention towards me. Every evening he prepares my place for the night, levelling the ground and cutting down branches which he covers with leaves, and I am thus raised from the earth and protected from the dew. These guides lead a hard life, tramping in all seasons along these wretched roads, having scarcely time, morning and evening, to swallow a little rice, and having but little sleep at nights, tormented by ants, and exposed to the attacks of robbers, against whom they have constantly to be on their guard."

68: Mouhot--113 N-5
116, 579, 162, 631, 177.63
636.63

(1858-61) 1864

Laotians
Siam

"These precautions are very necessary, for Korat is a nest of robbers and assassins, the resort of all the scum of the Laotian and Siamese races. Bandits and vagrants, escaped from slavery or from prison, gather here like the vultures and wolves which follow armies and caravans. It is not that they enjoy complete immunity, for the [HD: Siamese] governor, son of Bodine, the general who conquered Battambong and the revolted provinces, is viceroy of the state, has absolute power of life and death, and is, they say, very severe, cutting off a head or a hand with little compunction. But still it is Siamese justice, 'non inviola:' there are neither gendarmes nor police; the person robbed must himself arrest the offender and bring him before the judge. Even his neighbour will give no assistance in the capture."

68: Mouhot--275-276 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 162, 579

"Korat Ongcor Aithe of the Cambodians was formerly the bulwark of Cambodia on the north and west: a solid rampart supported by a large épaulement, the work of Khmer Dôme (the ancient Cambodians), still surrounds the town. It is at present governed by a Siamese mandarin of the first class, a kind of viceroy, but the ancient inhabitants have nearly disappeared, and it contains only about 300 Chinese or their descendants, small resident merchants, 300 other individuals who go about the country trading, and 1500 or 2000 Laotians, Cambodians, and Siamese, who, like wolves or jackals which follow an army or caravan, have come there from all parts of the kingdom, or have remained there after the wars of Laos and Cambodia, in [276] order to lead a life in harmony with their inclinations, attacking travellers and Chinese merchants, in fact a band of miscreants, with few exceptions destitute of all good qualities."

Kha

101 [261] [Illustration] [262] [Blank page] [263] As far as marriages, deaths, etc. go, we find practically the same customs among the Kha tribes of southern Laos as among their fellows in northern Laos.

231 It should be noted that the Rades breed a variety of small horses
439 which are highly prized in Annam, Laos and Siam.

[533] "These Khas love music and dancing. Their favorite instruments are gongs and bells.

534 "A set of gongs consists of seven, nine or twelve single ones. Made of copper and often very beautiful, these gongs take the shape of a cylinder from forty to eighty centimeters in diameter, only one end of which is closed by a vibrating plate. The cap worn by our judges and professors, although on a smaller scale, gives a fairly clear idea of the shape of these instruments. A few of the instruments are artfully cast and ornamented with much elegance. There is a solid ring about a third of the way along the gong's length which is part and parcel with the rest of the gong and makes it possible to hang it up on a side of the house, at about the height of a man's head, by means of a rattan thong fastened to the frame.

"The performers stand facing the battery and pummel it with their fists, taking care to strike the vibrating plate in the center so that it will emit a true tone. This procedure produces perfect musical notes, which are accompanied by the dull resonances of the tom-toms and the sharp sonorities of the bells made of a copper and tin alloy. The gongs bring a high price, and when it is a fine one a complete series is worth from 1,200 to 1,500 francs.

"In some villages the performers each take an instrument and hold it in a sling fastened to their shoulder, then form a column in single file. This Indian-style procession marches from the center of the house towards one of its extremities, striking more and more gently as it moves away from its point of departure. Then it returns to the center, unleashing a compensating crescendo. The maneuver begins again towards the other end of the house, and the musical promenade continues until the musicians are exhausted.

535 "When the Khas begin to play and perform the Kimlang (a very
272 stirring war dance) and the warriors grow excited from dancing and
•579 from drinking rice wine, it is wise to make them stop as soon as they begin to pick up their weapons, for when drunk with alcohol and enflamed with ardor they are no longer masters of themselves.

714 "War dress includes feathers in the hair and a sort of cross of Saint Andrew formed of cloth rolled and crossed on the chest. Weapons, quivers, arrows, crossbows, bucklers, spears and swords complete their equipment.

Kha

563 their prisoners among the Djarais. This state of affairs cannot go on
567 [106] indefinitely, and after settling the question of the Djarais which is more urgent, it will be necessary for Annam and Laos to pacify these tribes by a common agreement.

563 4. Rognao, Bahnar, Goelar and Habau Khas. These tribes, over
797 whom the missionaries exercise moral authority and many of whose villages are Catholic, can be regarded as pacified even though they do not pay any tribute. I have previously explained why it would not be politic, in my opinion, to require tribute in this region as of the present time.

These tribes, which are entirely located in Laotian territory, are quite tranquil but in continual dread of undertakings by their Djarai neighbors.

563 5. The great Djarai tribe, which is by far the most important and most numerous in the estimation of the missionaries. It is said to include nearly 150,000 inhabitants and is the finest racial type which I have seen in all the Kha region.

Many villages are subject to our authority and pay the head tax. Others, such as those which I found in the valley of the Psi and on the Sesane, obey our orders, keep the roads in repair, receive traders and travelers with perfect hospitality and will pay tribute whenever we wish.

563 But there are two groups which are absolutely rebellious to our
619 penetration. These are: 1) the groups of villages of Pley-Qho and
643 Pley-Denang immediately south of the mission; and 2), somewhat further to the south, the group of the Sadetes whose two chieftains, the kings of water and fire, inhabit the points which are marked on
579 the map as Pa-Tao-Ia and Pa-Tao-Ngo.

563 The first of these groups has continuously committed hostile
668 acts against us. They are the ones who attacked the convoy of M.
726 Navelle when this official came to visit the mission, who have constantly attacked convoys on the road from Ang-Ke to Kon-Toum, who more recently robbed a Laotian hunter of merchandise valued at more than 1,000 piasters and pierced him with sword thrusts, and, finally, who attacked M. Lacouture and killed one of his guides. These villages are dreaded by all their neighbors. It was they against whom Meyréna (1) marched, but his success was not sufficiently

(1) Since I have been led to pronounce the name of the man who dreamed of creating a Cedang kingdom, I should say a few words regarding this adventure which seems to me to have been greatly exaggerated.

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina

1[M. Leveau, senior French official in Laos.--Analyst] Laotians AM8 Kha AM7

INTO THE MEO COUNTRY

After dinner, when the Conseiller[1] relaxed for an hour, he could sometimes be persuaded to talk about some of his problems. These were the chronic worries of the Issarak[2] and the Viet-Minh. To the west of Luang Prabang the frontier with Burma started, and Burmese irregulars crossed it from time to time. Chinese opium smugglers conducted a regular trade with the Meos, and turned pirate when business was bad. But now that the communists had taken over in Yunnan there was some signs of this traffic slackening. And then the Meos themselves. They were passing like a blight through the mountains. Leveau's ambition was to change their agricultural habits. If they could be persuaded to come down to 1000 feet he could give them irrigated rice-fields to cultivate, and had offered to provide the buffaloes to do the work.

L 669 579 548

I brought up the question of the Khas. The Khas are the aboriginals of Laos and are, in fact, Moï tribes under another name. Several hundred years ago they were conquered and enslaved by the Laotian nation, and now Khas were to be seen hanging about the market places of Laotian towns and villages, utterly broken and degenerate; as helpless as the pathetic remnants of once powerful Indian tribes in North America. I asked if it was true that Laotians still possessed Kha slaves. Leveau smiled in his tolerant and sceptical Laotian way and said that it all depended what you meant by slavery. The slavery of the old West Indian plantation kind was unknown in the Far East. For superstitious if for no other reasons, the peoples of Indo-China always trod very gently when it came to oppression of others. The spirits of their ancestors had to be reckoned with, and they themselves if pushed too far might be forced to revenge themselves by the efficient, occult methods strangers were always imagined to possess. He cited the well-known fact of a collective bad-conscience on the part of the Vietnamese, who conduct special sacrifices and offer symbolical rent to the spirits of the unknown aboriginal possessors of the land they now occupy. Leveau believed that slavery did occasionally exist, but that it took more the form of a racial aristocracy maintaining a subject people in a condition of

K 566 769

566

2["free men" of Laos and Cambodia.--Analyst]

king of Luang-Prabang could make themselves heard more effectively than he himself could. 648* 643* 175*

/190/ First mission to China (1729). Intha-Som recognized the truth of this bit of advice and in 1729 charged Phya-Muong-Khoua, Phya-Mune and Phya-Sivongsa to go to the emperor of China, deliver two elephants to him as a gift and ask him to recall the Mousseux. 563 /431/

After a long voyage the mission reached Pekin without any untoward happening. They were welcomed most courteously and the Chinese government promised to give satisfaction, but only on condition that the king of Luang-Prabang should continue to send a pair of elephants every five years. An agreement was reached on this basis and the ambassadors brought back to Luang-Prabang the assurance that the Mousseux would be invited to return to their own country (1).

1. The viceroy of "Muong-Se-Luong" received orders to recall all the Mousseux to China. The orders must have been carried out rather ineffectively, for today the Mousseux still form an important group in the region of Muong-Sing.

Second mission to China (1734). A second mission also led by Phya-Muong-Khoua left five years later to deliver the promised tribute, but on their way encountered bands of robbers called "White Flags" who forced them to fall back /191/ on Muong-La. Phya-No-Muong placed an escort of five hundred men at their disposition and sent word to the Chinese governor of Yunnan-Sen who also sent out a detachment at once to disperse the pirates. The latter's leaders were finally captured and handed over to the emperor's delegate. The ambassadors were then able to fulfill their mission and returned to Luang-Prabang laden with gifts for their king (1). 648* 175* /579/

1. The Guimet Museum has the seal which was delivered by China to the "Sovereigns of Laos" when the Tartaro-Manchu dynasty acceded to the throne, "in exchange for the one which they held from the Ming dynasty." (Pavie, A la conquete des coeurs, p. 347.) Intha-Som was therefore reviving an age-old tradition. This seal, which was carried off by Deo-van-Tri when Luang-Prabang was sacked by his

Although not organized at first, their bands gradually formed 175*
into armed contingents which soon became known under the names 563
of /237/ black, yellow or red Flags, depending on the color of
their banners. In contrast to the Meos, who were called White
Flags (1) and whose settlement fifteen years previously had, on the

1. See above, pp. 212 and 213.

whole, been permanent and not too violent, the Hos waged a war
of brigandry which calls to mind the sinister exploits of the Grandes /579/
Compagnies which were dismembered by Du Guesclin. They razed
villages, held the terrorized inhabitants for ransom, or else hired
themselves out to the inhabitants to protect them against other
bands. The cantons of the Black River were the first to fall prey to
their pillaging, but then the leaders of the region came to terms
with them, interested them in their internal disputes, took them
with them to the Tonkinese delta to aid the Annamites against the
French, and finally sent one band against another in the Laotian
territories which they devastated as far as Nong-Khay. Both mili-
tary and diplomatic action had to be taken by France following the
first Pavie mission in order to suppress them. Those of them who /144/
did not go back to China abandoned their guns to become farmers,
married Thai or Kha wives and thus created a stock of mixed blood
which, by successive crossings, /238/ merged into the mass of the
population.

Restitution of the Prabang by Siam (1867). In the midst of all 648*
the cares which the threats of these invaders caused him, Tiantha- 175*
Koumane had the satisfaction of restoring the venerated statue of 778
the Prabang to his people.

Carried off to Vientiane by Thao-Nong in 1707 and ravished
successively by Chulalok in 1778 and by Bodin in 1828 (1), the

1. See above, pp. 47, 133, 156, 158 and 174.

kingdom's ancient palladium was finally returned by King Mongkut,
in 1867, to Fa-Ngoun's descendant, who sent the Oupahat Oun-Kham
to Bangkok to take solemn possession thereof.

Taken by land as far as Xieng-Mene (Luang-Prabang right bank),
it was displayed for seven days and seven nights at the landing of

Laotian provinces, over which it exercised only nominal authority as yet (2). It must, however, combat the rights which Annam /161/

2. Even over the old principality of Vientiane, now three- /631/ quarters depopulated, where it had had the wisdom, or the weakness, to leave the old chiefs of muongs in charge of the government and had required of them only an oath of fidelity and the payment of personal and land taxes in the form of one large annual tribute.

might one day be led to assert over these regions, and it must place them under military occupation so as to present the emperor Tu-Duc, and eventually the Quai d'Orsay, with a fait accompli without further delay. The great invasion of Tran-Ninh by the Hos was to furnish it a pretext in 1873.

/242/ Invasion of Tran-Ninh by the Hos (1872). A large band 563 of "Red Flags," numbering about two thousand pirates who had 175• been driven out of the Black River by the "Yellow Flags" towards /167/ the end of 1871, fell upon the plateau by way of Xieng-Ko, which /579/ it sacked despite the desperate resistance of the inhabitants, and entrenched itself in the island of Bandon near the village of Banban. A first column which Chao-Hung sent against it fled bravely at the first contact with the invaders, and since everything ends in a song in the land of Lao., their panic was at once turned to ridicule and put in couplets which are still sung today (1).

1. The following is a translation of the first of these 539 couplets:

Sanousit leaves his opium pipe which is lost.
Sisania throws away his opium lamp.
Chao-un-Vico abandons his Annamite gong.
All is lost, all is thrown away.
They hide in the forest, gasping with fear.
They do not even keep so much as a pin.
They hasten homewards through the brush.
By the shortest road.
For three days it is impossible to eat.
Chao-un-Vico's face is no longer human (fear has distorted his features).

"It seems that this refrain was sung whenever Sanousit, 563 175•

Anou's old capital without difficulty and fortified themselves there, 726
completing the destruction of its ruins in their search for the royal 175*
treasures (1), and from there sent rapid incusrions into the present- 563

1. They tore down the central minaret of the That-Luong.

day muong of Borikhane.

The governor of Nongkhay, blackaded in his city which was 648*
thronged with fugitives, joined his cries of alarm to the appeal 726
which the king of Luang-Prabang had sent to Bangkok, and the 175*
Siamese government dispatched an army which first succeeded in 563
driving the Hos northward and then launched a flank attack on them by detaching eight hundred men and sending them to reinforce the forces which King Oun-Kham had mobilized. But the campaign which had been so forcefully begun soon softened in the face of the pirates' counterthrusts, /245/ for the latter had shut themselves into nearly impregnable fortresses. Pressed to make an end of it and to save face, the Siamese leaders came to terms with them and gave them permission to remain in the land in return for vague recognition of the suzerainty of Bangkok. As for the surviving inhabitants of the circumscriptions which had been purged of Hos, /727/ they were "severely blamed for having fled before the enemy" and driven along the Mekong with their flocks. "10,600, men, women and children departed. The exodus of these poor folk across this land of famine was a pitiful spectacle. Most of them died along the way, and a few were able to flee. Only six thousand reached Siam" (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique," Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./

Luang-Prabang had been miraculously spared, but anarchy of 579
the utmost violence was unleased at the very gates of the princi- 563
pality. The "Yellow Flags" invaded the Sip-Song-Chau-Thai, 727
whose leader Cam-Sinh had joined forces with the "Black Flags" 175*
of Ong-Liu (2), while the Meos and the Khas stirred up trouble in

2. Luu-Vinh-Phuoc, encamped at Lao-Kay.

their turn -- seemingly at first merely in self-defense against the Hos, then as a means of existence in the general confusion -- by

579 ravaging the region of Dien-Bien-/246/ Phu as far as Muong-Ngoi.
563 King Oun-Kham was growing old and carefree and felt incapable,
727 when left entirely to his own resources, of calming the mortal dis-
175* quietude of his people. Thus Siamese agents, the number of whom
/648/* was constantly on the increase, were welcomed all along the Upper Mekong as the only protectors from whom effective aid could be expected.

636 Relations with the cantons of the Black River. The man Cam-
175* Sinh, who was of Chinese origin himself, was nevertheless a friend of the princes of Luang-Prabang, but he was then too preoccupied with driving the invaders out of his own domains to lend any support to his neighbor.

His remote ancestors were military mandarins in Quang-Si and had settled three hundred years previously in Muong-Lai, which they had pacified in behalf of the king of Anna. Their authority extended around Lai-Chau as far as Yunnan in the north and Muong Theng in the south (Dien-Bien-Phu, the legendary cradle of the Laotian race). At this time they had reached a peaceful agreement
/728/ with the kings of Lan-Xang, most likely Nokeo-Koumane or Thammi-Karath who had just /247/ shaken off the Burmese yoke (1) and who

1. See above, pp. 97 and 100.

were glad to give them charge of the "white" and "black" Thais of the region in exchange for a triennial payment of thirty-three taels of silver "and one horse" (2). Relations had subsequently become

2. Cf. the Chronicle of Muong-Lai given by Deo-van-Tri to Auguste Pavie in 1894.

completely friendly and trusting to such a degree that when Cam-Sinh was in conflict with several of his relatives around 1850 he had not hesitated to place two of his children, one of whom was Deo-van-Tri, in Souka-Seum's hands (3).

3. See above, p. 213, note.

669 Revolt of the Khas of Muong-Ngoi (1876). It was not until 1876,
175* after he had temporarily driven back the Yellow Flags, that he was
563 able to send any reinforcements to Oun-Kham to sustain the struggle

The double action by Pavie and by Colonel Pernot in the 648*
cantons of the Black River (January - February 1888). Tired of 175*
waiting in vain, he suddenly decided on January 28, 1888, on the strength of vague rumors indicating the presence of French soldiers in the region of Muong-Lai, to set out alone, or nearly alone, to meet Colonel Pernot. With a fine scorn for danger, he went up the Nam-Ou and the Nam-Ngoua camping in the burned and almost deserted villages and risking being attacked at each bend of the river, but collecting precious information on the movements of the bands and on the state of mind of the populace, from the few inhabitants who had returned, "worried and gloomy," to their daubed huts. Thus he had confirmation of the arrival of the Pernot column in Lai on January 16 after violent engagements with Deo-van-Tri's Black Flags, who had tried to bar its way and which it had hurled back to the north. In the course of his conversations with the native chieftains (immediately won over in their turn by the inexplicable trust which was everywhere inspired by this extraordinary /276/ messenger of peace) he acquired the conviction that the natives who had suffered raids for so long a time were entirely disposed to welcome the French as protectors against the brigands, but that they maintained a reticent attitude out of fear of Siamese reprisals if, as they believed, our troops were only passing through. "Our soldiers are going away," Pavie answered them, "but others will come. Rest assured in this. You have become subjects of France like the Annamites on whom you used to depend."

On February 17 -- with what joy! -- he finally joined the Pernot column in Tuan-Giao while it was still firing on the remains of one last band. He accompanied it as far as the Black River where, without any further difficulty, it effected its junction with the Oudri detachment which was itself solidly established in Son-La. After setting forth in detail to the colonel the fruit of his observations during a whole year in Laos and developing his plans for a "peace mission" whose full success he guaranteed with the tenacious faith of an apostle, Pavie settled on a plan of joint action involving the /579/ creation of posts in Lai-chau, Son-La and Van-Bu to strengthen our intention to maintain our forces in the land, and immediate negotiations with those of the native chieftains who had joined the pirates, especially /277/ with Deo-van-Tri who did not seem to be a common gang leader but an intelligent and loyal adversary who enjoyed great authority and whose submission would be great with consequences. Then he regained Luang-Prabang so as to settle